Rhymes of Friendship

G. R. Hall

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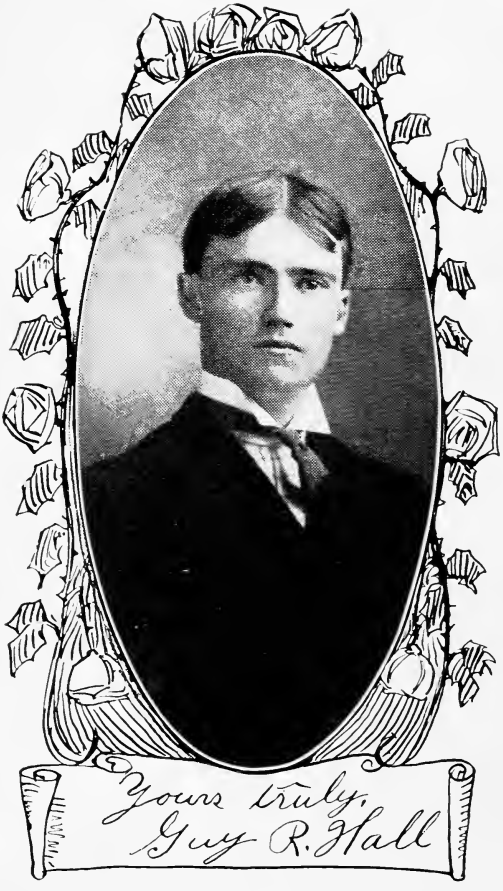
Yours truly,
Guy R. Hall

RHYMES OF FRIENDSHIP

BY

GUY R. HALL

ILLUSTRATED BY E. B. DAVIS

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TO MY PARENTS,

TO WHOM I AM FIRST AND MOST GREATLY INDEBTED,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

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PREFACE

IN COMPILING and publishing this little collection of verse, my distinct aim has been to give my friends the best fruits of my literary efforts. My intention is not to experiment with the good will of the public in order to discern what pecuniary profit I can derive from the work. I cannot hope for greater remuneration than a continuation of such kind words and encouraging compliments as I have already received. Like the wayside singer, unheeded by a majority of the common multitude, I sing for such as will pause to listen; not only those whose gifted hands "can touch the magic string," but the voiceless poets also, to whose natural sense of the beautiful the ring of poetry gives delightful response.

Thankful for the reassurance of friends I submit this brief volume to the public to be received and reacted upon, not as a work of exceptional merit, but as a gift in token of my appreciation of their many favors.

Very sincerely,

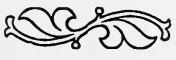
GUY R. HALL.

RHYMES OF FRIENDSHIP

LINES

(To a fair co-ed of other days.)

BY SYLVAN streams, through flow'ry mead,
Doth friendship's fancy rove,
Their blossoms hold the sacred creed
That tells of perfect love;
But sweet as is the richest smell
When fragrance flows most free,
The honied draught cannot excel
The smiles thou gavest me.



SONG OF TRUST

I.

ARISE, my soul, and cast aside
This dark disguise of grief,
And bid the sorrows that betide
Thee henceforward be brief;
Loath not to bear thy cross of care,
Nor condescend to pine,
But be thine ever-constant prayer:
"Not my will, Lord, but Thine!"

II.

Though darkest shades pervade the gloom
And compass thee about,
A joy may still within thee bloom,
When all is dark without;
Though life may seem forlorn and sad
Along this dreary way,
Beyond the mists the air is glad
With many a brightening ray.

III.

Rejoice, nor let thy faith in Him
  Grow weak in hours of pain,
Let not the keeper's eyes wax dim
  Nor love's warm ardor wane;
With humble purpose bravely spurn
  The gifts of worldly lust,
To Him thy little all return
  In prayers of loving trust.

IV.

O pine not, though exceeding sore
  Thy light afflictions be,
Thy Jesus all our sorrows bore
  On cruel Golgotha's tree;
He will his erring child attend
  In mercy all-divine,
Then let thy prayer today ascend:
  "Not my will, Lord, but Thine!"

MEMORIAL STANZAS

(Read at the Hall family reunion, August 18, 1906.)

I.

STILL softly murmuring o'er the mound
Where honor's humble toilers sleep,
The west wind wails a doleful sound
And seems with muffled voice to weep;
Morn bathes with dew her grassy stems,
And fragrance steeps the atmosphere,
The sod is strewn with glistening gems
Where parted love first shed its tear.

II.

The hands that delved, the hearts that yearned,
The feet that trod th' unbroken way,
The patient face, the hair that turned
From morn's gay hues to twilight's gray,—
When fortune's glittering tinsels wane,
And wasted splendors pass forgot,
Their righteous works shall live and reign
With truths that wake to perish not.

III.

Yon greensward holds the withered buds,
  Whose unblown blossoms ne'er embossed
Life's path with summer's flowery floods
  Ere early fell the autumn's frost;
Full tender was the last caress,
  And gracious were the tears that fell
To fondly lave each treasured tress,
  The unction of love's last farewell.

IV.

Not in the churchyard's solitude
  Does memory's fancy yearn to rove,
She loiters through the verdant wood
  Where life abounds with joy and love;
Yet dear ones' faces, radiant, fair,
  Through memory's wakeful visions sweep,
We start to see the vacant chair,
  And grief returning needs must weep.

V.

They lived in love, they passed in peace,
With eyes of faith they saw afar
The goal where earthly labors cease,
And following hope's celestial star,
They broke the bonds of fleshly fears
And passed from darkness into day,
Where all of sorrow's galling tears
Their God himself shall wipe away!

STANZAS TO OUR SMILING GIRL

I.

O LET the pure sweet lily bloom
With exhalations rare
To wilt above the silent tomb
As mem'ries languish there;—
While listless fancies hourly troop
Where gathered friends of yore,
Let still the mournful grasses droop
To kiss the cold sods o'er.

II.

And let the ruddy roses blush
Where hearts beat light and free,
Where gay cantatas wildly gush
From childish throats of glee;
And grant to taintless innocence
Its wonted raptures still,
Nor seek from its convivial sense
To blight the quickening thrill.

III.

Yet for the winter's piercing cold
The lily naught avails,
The rose no splendor can unfold
To warm the blasting gales;
Must still the starless night seem long,
No solace to impart,
No ray, no smile, nor strain of song,
To glad withal the heart?

IV.

No! For the eyes that look through tears
Of sorrow all the while
Our lady's lovely face appears,
Whose sweet and queenly smile,
Whose queenly smile, so pure and calm,
Can visions drear dispel,
Suggesting e'er the hopeful psalm:
"Peace reigneth, all is well."

V.

"Peace reigneth,"—O triumphant thought,
Blest comforter thou art!
Most beauteous truth, by tongue untaught,
Her smiles can best impart;
Where'er her peaceful path may lead,
Through sunshine or through shade,
Be each pure smile and kindly deed
By Heaven's own love repaid.

TO MAREE

(12 years old.)

I.

WHAT pencil touches can portray
The beauty of a life as gay
And peaceful as thine own?
What blossoms with thy smiles compare?—
What roses by the balmy air
Of parting April blown?

II.

Supreme thy pleasures are, Maree,—
O would that thus they e'er should be,
And that thou should'st not know
The wounds that years can never heal,
The cankering griefs too many feel,—
The bitter cup of woe!

III.

O youthful eyes! we see in them
The luster of love's diadem,
Kindness, serene and pure!
And may it be that they shall yield
A fuller sympathy and wield
A power strong and sure!

IV.

Merrily chimes thy voice, Maree,
And rings your laugh with wholesome glee,
Thou seemest unaware
That thou a mortal creature art,
Destined to many a pain of heart,
Perplexity and care.

V.

Yet cheerful be, for it is well
That sorrow should not break the spell
Of joy so innocent,
And may you freely still partake
Of all the pleasures that can make
You even more content.

VI.

This cannot be for aye, Maree,
The girl will make the woman, she
Must bid farewell to youth,
But life which gives to fortune range
Has that for thee which cannot change,—
The Everlasting Truth.

VII.

And to this treasure ever cleave
With heart submissive to receive
The good it hath for thee,
And while through time you do your best
Just trust to Heaven's care the rest
And all is well, Maree!

TO DAISY

I.

I WALKED the headland green, profuse
With flowers rare, whose mingled hues
Gleamed through the sheen of morning dews
In red and blue and yellow;
How could I turn to go away
From such a company so gay
And pluck me not a sweet bouquet
With richest hues and mellow?

II.

Beneath mine eyes that summer morn
Laughed a white rose, should it be worn?
O dear! it pricked me with its thorn
And I was pained most crazy;
I turned me to the violet blue,—
"Sweet, modest flower, thou art true," —
But on me smiled with livelier hue,
Not far apart,—a daisy.

III.

"Ah, daisy! thou my heart hast won,
I'll steal thee from the shining sun;"
I plucked its stem, the deed was done,
And pressed it to my bosom;
O better Daisy, thou, to whom
My lines compare this lovely bloom,
With richer nectar and perfume
In love's sweet thoughts shalt blossom!

TO MARION

I.

OFT have we felt since you have gone
How shone your smiles, O Marion!
Your hour's brief call scarce heeded here
Has left to us a hallowed cheer.

II.

We knew you, loved you but somehow
We ne'er have felt before as now
The true worth of your nature sweet,
To rank with all the loveliest meet.

III.

Let love continue and where'er
Some sorr'wing brother sighs despair,
Lest he all higher aims should yield
Smile still to strengthen, save and shield.

IV.

And gentle, loving spirit, we
Shall keep one sacred memory:—
The fair and smiling face of thine
That gave its fullest light to shine.

TO LILLIAN

I.

MEET it seemeth, Dear, that we
Should thy virtues envy thee,
We, who deeds of love admire
And from day to day aspire
To attain that tranquil mind,
To which thou
At length, somehow
Hast not vainly been inclined.

II.

There are those whose formal creeds
Hamper so their daily deeds
That they cease not night nor day
To beseech and weep and pray
For some sparing providence
In behalf
Of those who laugh
In youth's happy innocence.

III.

Thy serene and smiling look
Stronger is than stern rebuke
To such boastful scorners, these
Pessimistic Pharisees;
Thou hast grace to still bestow
    Gentleness
    In deeds that bless
Hearts that feel thy overflow.

IV.

And if thou shouldst deign to sigh
When the tides of doubt rage high,
Should thy spirit's feeble plaint
Murmur through the tumult, faint,—
Should we think this grief of thine
    Nursed within
    Thy heart is sin,
That thou shouldst a moment pine?

V.

In my fancy I can see
Him who groaned on Calvary,
Overwhelmed by all the blame
Of our vices and their shame,—
How in agony he sighed,
Suffering,
Though Heaven's King
By Earth's children crucified.

VI.

Thou art human, better be,
For it best becometh thee;
Imperfection hath a charm
When the sympathies are warm;
'Tis a blessing cast away
When we shun
The thought of fun,—
There's a season to be gay.

VII.

Lavish be thy cheerful words
Like the mingled chants of birds;
What were this existence worth
Had it not that fount of mirth
Springing up with healing powers,
    Timely ere
    Our hearts despair,
Pining through the lonely hours.

VIII.

Thou thy pretty whims must act,
Fancy, too, must fashion fact;
There be none with true desires
But thy daily course admires;
Self-directed thou dost ply
    Work and play
    With gentle sway
As the light-winged hours sweep by.

IX.

Who is he that ever said
Thou art vainly proud, Dear Maid?
Hath he ne'er discerned that pride
Cometh from the heart inside?
Thou dost scatter welcome cheer
To the few,
And many, too,
And thou art to many dear!

X.

Heaven be gracious unto thee,
Lillian, with a mind as free
From all dread of worldly cares
As the pure and gentle airs,
That with soothing softness waft
Kisses where
The earth is bare
Or where nodding daisies laugh!

THE PEARL

I.

O PRICELESS pearl, Old Ocean's choicest gem!
Hallowed thy crystal glory, spotless white;
Born with unnumbered beauties, diadem
Washed from the deep of night.

II.

Thou'rt as the lowly in heart, methinks, and meek,
Lovely and beloved thou dost remain
To teach sweet patience to the faltering weak
Engrossed with care and pain.

III.

To loathsome malice and to lust unknown,
Jewel of the dreaming artist's first desire,
Whose modest purity hath long outshone
Ruby and bold sapphire.

IV.

E'en at thy passive, silent attitude
We are constrained to linger 'neath a spell,
With solemn wonder and with awe imbued,
No language art can tell.

V.

The ever-restless rover of the seas
Hears through the roaring main thy softer song,—
And fondly drinks of the honeyed melodies
Caught from thy fairy tongue.

VI.

Ah,—fancy a living heart so nobly pure,
A face of smiling radiance, with rich curls
In beauteous ecstasy embroidering o'er,—
Queen of the realm of Pearls!

A PORTRAIT OF MEMORY.

I.

THERE once did glow a modest pride
Within her azure eyes,
So soft a spark that we had lied
To harshly criticize,
And with this gem so twinkling vied
Its sister star, Surprise.

II.

If flattering phrase I ventured e'er
That glance grew sweetly bold,
Then flitting o'er a brow more fair
Than Aphrodite of old,
Surprise would strew strange shadows there
Beneath the curls of gold.

III.

What, though, perchance a little vain?
O could these eyes of mine
Reflect the beauty back again
That streamed on them from thine,—
I too might be a little vain
Such charm and rapture mine!

IV.

But whence Surprise? I knew not whence
That half-blown blush might be,
That silent gaze which often since
In dreams has fall'n on me
So kindly yet so doubting, hence
So deeply mystery.

V.

Upon some far Elysian heath
Where fragrances so rare
Through endless years sweet roses breathe
To changeless Morning's air,
Shall she above this realm of Death
Abide my coming there?

VI.

Shall these mild, those intenser beams
That used on earth to glow,
Alternate still as in my dreams
Today they come and go,
Or radiant, joyful, bathed in streams
Where heavenly fountains flow?

VII.

Still loitering 'neath old shady bowers,
Which now are still and lone,
I can but weep to think of hours
That once were and are gone,
And stoop to pluck some choicest flowers
To strew her grave upon!

ALTHA CRAIN

I.

SOME lasses excel in the finery they wear,
Or the elegant fashion of balling their hair,—
But, pray, 'mongst a hundred thus handsomely dressed,
In point of real beauty, which one is the best?

II.

The belle of the city may lavishly smear
The talcum on thick where the blushes appear,
Her suit may be gaudy and gay in extreme,
Her laces may rustle, her ribbons may stream.

III.

When a lad from the country comes under her eye
Who wears a cheap hat or a fifteen-cent tie,
To speak to him, likely she'll ne'er take the pains,
On account of a difference in costume and brains.

IV.

But up on North College away from the noise
And stir of the city, and shouts of the boys,
Lives Altha, the pride of the fair little street
The first of its damsels, its flower most sweet.

V.

Like the gay-throated thrush in the tree where she swings
She peeps through the green leaves and whistles and sings
Till all who reside in that little home spot
Have the last bitter tears of their sorrows forgot.

VI.

O today I can hear the gay laugh on her lips
As down through their little green orchard she trips!
Did a man or a woman or child in this town
Ever see on her brow the mere fringe of a frown?

VII.

Miss Altha is happy, and O can it be
That from heavy temptation her spirit is free?
Aloof from the level of grief and of pain,
That she utters no murmur nor seems to complain?

VIII.

Ah, sweet is her life and its teaching is more
To her friends and her schoolmates than ever before;
'Tis better to sing through our trials than complain,
Is not this the lesson thou teachest, Miss Crain?

IX.

This world is too gloomy, too gloomy by half,
So whistle and giggle and titter and laugh,
Let every one join in the merry refrain:
O its tra-la and ha-ha for thee, ALTHA CRAIN!

LINES

(Penned in an autograph album of a lady friend.)

I.

HARBOR no malice, let your ways
Be ways of peace, do what is good;
And live so that the world will praise
Your worthy type of womanhood.

II.

Hold fast to honor, ever cling
To truth, a pearl of greatest price;
Fair lady, touch not anything
That bears a lingering taint of vice.

III.

To pleasure do not sacrifice
The precepts of your better sense,
Make love's unerring way your choice,
And trust the Master's providence.

"THERE IS TIME"

I.

THERE is a time to study,
There is a time to play,
A time to muse, and also time
To eat three times a day;
Plenty of time for smiling,
Some time to laugh aloud,
There's time for peaceful solitude,
And time to join the crowd.

II.

There is time to be cheerful,
But none to cherish scorn,
We may serious be but never
Be all hopelessly forelorn;
We may dream dreams and see visions
If we pine not o'er our dreams,
We may even love intensely
If we go not to extremes.

III.

We may taste the cup of kindness
If we will but pass it on,
And partake of joys hilarious
If we keep sweet through the fun;
We may even joke companions,
If we don't get hot and cuss
When the other fellow practices
As good a joke on us.

IV.

O there are years, yes, many years
Of time to do the right,
There's time to cherish faltering hearts
But none their hopes to blight!
There may, alas, arrive a time
To shed regretful tears
For lack of moderation
In our mirth of younger years!

SLEEP

O GENTLE sleep! that from thy ebon throne
Descendest to anoint the toiler's eyes
With healing unction, when the daylight flies
And all the clamor of the day is flown,
What sweet communion with thee all alone
When visions more ethereal arise
To pacify the restless, broken sighs
That linger from the evening's weary moan!
Sprinkle, mild goddess, some lethean dews
Upon the fevered forehead sore with care,
Draw the dark veil, despondency, and lose
The burdened spirit in the boundless air,
Where fragrance-laden zephyrs ceaseless fan
Fresh draughts of courage to the new-born man.

LUX ET VERITAS

(Published in the 1905 Arbutus of Indiana University.)

OUR gracious Alma Mater, while thy name
Is yet the symbol of the good and pure,
While Light and Truth unsullied still endure
The radiant heralds of thy deathless fame,—
O be thy nurturing tenderness the same
As in thine honored past, still strong and sure!
May the same ties that link our loves secure
Our earnest strife, our every worthy aim;
Still lead us onward, lovingly direct
Our path as from thy fond embrace we part,
And as we leave thy footstool to perfect
Immortal structures fashioned to thine art,
O quicken thou not more our intellect
Than all the grateful passions of our heart!

STRAINS OF PASSION

HOW can the soul impassioned hold its peace
When thrilled with nameless joy or stung with pain,
When seized with hatred or with love which fain
Would stave the heart's stout bars to gain release
And flood the joyful lips with ecstasies?
For such inspiring, animating strain
Can all of passion's raging currents drain
Till consciousness streams on with wonted ease;
Then, O my soul, lift up thy voice in song
And let the burden of thy numbers be
Sung in the spirit of the major key!—
Not so, perchance, when thou shalt come among
Brethren whose woes implore thy sympathy,
But sing thy plaintive strain with power to solace strong.

DOGGEREL AND DIALECT

DOGGEREL AND DIALECT

IN HAYMAKIN'

I.

WITH the sultry air a-sizzin'—
Hot, and mornin' breezes laid,
When the mercury has risen
To the "ninety in the shade,"
'Bout the time Pap cuts the hay down
An' he talks o' takin' in,
I jest feel somehow away down
In my breast it ain't no sin
Jest to saunter, none to aid me,
To the little grassy mound,
Where the old, big maple shade tree
Spreads its shadder on the ground.

II.

Folks are differ'nt in make-up,
An' I 'low they'll allus be,
So when they is hay to take up
There are better hands than me,
For in timothy and clover
I have labored till I've felt,
As I piled the windrows over,
That I's jest about to melt;
And I've sort o' doubted whether
Any feller should or not
Work at hayin' when the weather
Is so awful, swelterin' hot!

III.

O the atmosphere is brimmin'
With the sweetest things that be
When they's peace amongst the women
Who delight in pesterin' me!
An' when hayin' comes in leap year
An' yer not a-pitchin' hay,
Boys, you'd better sort o' keep yer
Wits about you all the day;—

Fer this woman question only
  Would a feller's mind be free
As he muses all so lonely
  Underneath the maple tree.

IV.

O it's there I like to waller
  Tickled from my heart clean out!
But I'm careful not to holler
  Much when Pap is nigh about,
Fer, when he has cut the hay down
  An' he talks o' takin 'in,—
I jest feel somehow away down
  In my mind if I begin
Makin' too much fuss,—you chet-er,
  Pap'll call me to make hay
With a voice that I've learnt better
  Than to ever disobey!

"I'm careful not to holler
Much when Pap is nigh about"

MARCH BLUES

I.

FELLER sort o' gits a spell
O' blues 'bout this time o' year,
An' it's purty hard to tell
When the weather's so severe
Which is the worse o' the two,—
Feelin' cold er feelin' blue.

II.

Feller keeps hisself housed in,
Tries to feel good when he cain't,
All the kinds o' medicine
He kin take for his complaint
Never soothe his ills, but jes'
Make his bank account much less.

III.

'Bout the time a feller gits
To believin' spring has come,
Snowstorm comes along an' spits
Flurries ever'where, i gum!
And the piercin' wind jest blows
Through a feller's winter clo'es.

IV.

An' he ain't no pessimist
'Cause he gits to feelin' blue,
All the best folks on the list
Git that sort o' feelin', too,—
An' it seems to 'em 'at spring
Keeps a dilly-dallying.

V.

Ef a feller jes' concedes
That his soul is bein' tried,
An' kin trust that all his needs
By-um-by will be supplied,—
Matters not what ills occur,
He'll pull through much easier.

"Feller keeps hisself housed in"

"SANTY CLAUS" TALK

I.

IT AIN'T long till Santy Claus
Makes his reg'lar visit wiv
Candies, nuts, and toys to give
To good little childern, 'cause
I have noticed ever' year,
When Thansgivin' dinner's past,
That the days go mighty fast,
An' that Christmas time is near,—
An' when I lay down at night
Fer to dream in high delight
'Bout Old Santy, I keep thinkin'
That I hear his sleigh-bells clinkin'.

II.

O the good old Santy Claus,—
Wonder how he looks? I've heerd
Mommy say he has long beard
White as snow all round his jaws,

That his cheeks an' nose are red,—
  An' my mommy telled me, too:
  "Santy on'y comes when you
Little saps are 'sleep in bed,
An' he don't fetch nothin' then
Sich as toys and candy when
  Little saps like you an' Tommy
  Say bad words an' sass their mommy."

III.

Wonder how old Santy Claus,
  Where he lives away so far,
  Knows who all us childern are?
'Spec' he finds out by our pas;
He knows what we want, yes-sir,
  Santy does, an' allus brings
  Ever' Christmas jes the things
That the boys are lookin' fer;
An' it's lots o' fun, you bet,
Christmas mornin' jes' to get
  Out o' bed an' be a-peepin'
  'Round while all the folks is sleepin'!

"An' it's lots o' fun, you bet,
Christmas mornin' jes' to get
Out o' bed an' be a-peepin'
'Round while all the folks is sleepin'!"

IV.

They's no man 'cept Santy Claus
  Does the funny things he can,—
  He must be a jolly man,—
An' he's curious too, because
He slips in an' leaves our toys,
  Ever' present jes' bran new,
  An' he fills our stockin's, too,
And skips out wivout no noise;—
Mommy says 'at he can squeeze
Hisself up jest like he please,
  So I reckon that Old Santy
  Can get down our chimley,—can't 'e?

UPON RECEIVING HINTS OF CHRISTMAS

I.

CHRISTMAS gift!" my dear friends, "Christmas gift!" do you say?
Better wait till that morning when cry it you may;
"Christmas gift!" now don't chuckle and feel too secure,
Not till the glad morn can you get it for sure.

II.

"Christmas gift!" do you say, pretty lass, to your beau?
There's a limit to patience, 'twere well you should know;
Perhaps it would spare you some heartrending sighs
To speak to him kindly and not tantalize.

III.

"Christmas gift!" are you saying, young fellow, to her?
If she frowns, you've a case that is hopeless, yes-sir;
For what can you hope from a lass who depends
On her "dear papa's" purse for the money she spends?

IV.

"Christmas gift!" do you say, little girl, little boy?
Will some candy suffice or a nice little toy?
Better wait till that morning if you would be wise,—
Let him shout "Christmas gift," who first opens his eyes.

V.

"Christmas gift!" to the merchant I bid you to go,
He'll not frown at your cry, nor rebuke you, O no!
I'll vouch for his smile being hardy and hale
As he shows his abundance all ready for sale.

VI.

"Christmas gift!" hear the jingle of dollars and cents,—
O a feller's fair friends are an awful expense!
And I've thought as I lavished my coin with a grin;—
Now where shall Ma's "china" I promised come in?

VII.

"Christmas gift!" O the friends that a fellow can spot,
Many friendships so warm make a fellow half hot;
Rather shake with my friends once a day through the year
Than love so intensely as Christmas draws near.

VIII.

"Christmas gift!" my dear friends, "Christmas gift!" do you say ?
Better wait till that morning when cry it you may;
"Christmas gift!" just be quiet, ere long we shall see
Who rises and gets it, my friends, you or me.

NONSENSICALS

WE FIRST did love madly
But matters went sadly,
We lost all the joy that we sought;
This thought to refresh us:
For aye will be precious
The truth that so dearly was bought.

Hers was a name I could not disapprove,
Hers was a face I could not bear to love:
Since name and face were hard to separate,
I could but sigh, "Dear sweet, we both must wait."

May these poor tributes from my heart
Find welcome in thy hand, my fair,
And if perchance they should impart
Some kindred pang or common care,—
O hear affection's yearning plea,
And shed a tear of love for me!

EPITAPH

HERE lies beneath this emblem shield
A warrior young, who gave his life
To 'scape th' abuses of the field
And the tongue-thrusts of a heartless wife.

JIM LOWDEN'S EPITAPH

JIM LOWDEN, of woman born
And christened in the year 1810,
By 1840 wretched and forlorn
He wifeless walked among his fellowmen;
By 1860, he could boast no more,
But when another score
Of years had heaped its cares
Upon his silver hairs,
It came to pass one day
A woman crossed his lonely path and they
Were married,—
But Jim soon passed away,
And here beyond his sorrows he lies buried.
Man who is of woman born
Is of few days and forlorn;
Peaceful let his ashes lie,
Man who doth by woman die!

LINES

(Penned by one who stands up for the institute.)

O MONSTROUS fad! the township institute
Where pedagogues assemble to dispute;—
Nay, wise tribunal where all ponderous questions
Are settled at some sweet school-marm's suggestions;
Thy big assumptions, egotistic boast,
Both I detest, but love thy pay the most;
As for all teachers, there's not one of them
Who'll not assent to have his dear "per diem."

JACK STRIMPLER'S WIFE

I.

ONE thing with others I believe:
God first made Adam an' then Eve;
An' yit some folks is at a loss
To know which one he meant fer boss.

II.

Jack Strimpler an' his wife, these two,
Live jest across from where we do,
An' we know who's a-holdin' sway,
A-livin' neighbors thataway.

III.

It's "Git up, Old Man," ever' morn,
"An' feed the horses hay an' corn,
Fetch in a load o' kindlin' then,
An' treat yer wife like other men!"

IV.

The stock is fed, the wood is split
An' carried in, the fire is lit;
It burns away to ashes most,
And Strimpler has his bread to toast.

V.

"Please git up, Mother," is his plea,
"My weedy crop is needin' me;"
Again he urges and again:
"Do git up, Mother, it's past ten."

VI.

I hear a noise in their bed-room,
Sounds somepin like a flyin' broom,
I hear a woman's angry shriek
Confuse the words she tries to speak.

VII.

'Tis Monday, that is, washin'-day,
An' Strimpler is compelled to stay
An' sweat above the washin'-tub
With all the last week's duds to rub.

"'Tis Monday, that is, washin'-day"

VIII.

Nen in the afternoon he sweeps
The house through while his woman sleeps,
He dusts the parlor rugs an' chairs
An' their new bed-room set upstairs.

IX.

An 'ef she has a stove to black,
It's "Come, apply the polish, Jack;"
An 'ef he soils the oil cloth
The woman gets exceeding wroth.

X.

Before he harnesses an' plows
He has to milk eleven cows,
An' when he comes to strain the milk,—
Wy, here's his woman dressed in silk!

XI.

I've been perplexed enough an' felt
Some keen tongue-lashes, an' have smelt
The brimstone, but in face o' fac's
My trials ain't one-tenth o' Jack's.

XII.

Some gossips blame the woman, some
Are prophesyin' worse to come,
Still others charge she is possessed
An' wish her husband peace an' rest.

XIII.

I wouldn't add one slightest grain
Of weight to Strimpler's life o' pain,
I wouldn't whet no butcher-knife
To wreak revenge aginst his wife.

XIV.

But any man 'at's cuffed like Jack,
Who hain't got sense to turn his back,
Deserves a woman's broomstick blows
Right where he gits 'em—on the nose.

DREAM OF THE PROFESSOR OF SCIENCE

I.

PROFESSOR stood within his dream
As in his waking hours,
When everything around did seem
Controlled by mystic powers.

II.

His cap he ventured to remove,
When much to his surprise,
It rose toward the clouds above
And vanished in the skies.

III.

He saw the vivid lightning flash
In blinding bolts and keen,
But heard no after thunder crash,
Nor could a cloud be seen.

IV.

He stood beneath a noonday sun,
  His limbs grew numb and chill,
The streams, he noticed, had begun
  To turn and flow up-hill.

V.

He dropped a match in oxygen,
  And lo, out went the flame;
Experimented once again,—
  Result was still the same.

VI.

He gazed with half-wide-open mouth
  O'er the horizon far,
And saw suspended o'er the South
  Gleam out the Polar Star.

VII.

Pale grew his face as if some care
  His learned mind distressed,
When now he witnessed the Great Bear
  Enthroned above the West.

VIII.

He saw spring flowers pop their heads
  Above a winter snow,
And thirty inches from their beds
  He saw the onions grow.

IX.

He saw his genial cook and wife
  Get angry at a cat,
She threw their sharpest butcher-knife
  Which turned into a rat.

X.

And now attempting to inhale
  A deep, refreshing breath,
His intercostals seemed to fail
  To stem approaching death.

XI.

At length, with a despairing look
  He woke, exclaiming,—"Pshaw!"
Some say he mildly blamed his cook
  For this strange breach of law.

"He saw his genial cook and wife
Get angry at a cat"

TO AN OLD SCHOOL-MATE

I.

THIS life as ever has, I see,
Its clear and cloudy weather,
The same today as 'twas when we
Were both in school together.

II.

I overlaugh myself at times,
Else would the flesh grow weary,
But soberness, it makes my rhymes
Disconsolate and dreary.

III.

If Master Fate, I've sometimes thought,
Could earn a man a living,
I'd be more righteous, ay and not
Be cruel and unforgiving.

IV.

More seldom would I lay this head
  Upon a restless pillow,
With spirit tossed uncomforted
  On sorrow's heaving billow.

V.

But yet methinks there is a balm
  To heal my sorest anguish,
And I am for a moment calm,—
  A moment cease to languish:—

VI.

This life as ever has, I see,
  Its clear and cloudy weather,
The same today as 'twas when we
  Were both in school together.

UNCLE'S OLD SAYIN'

I.

"JEST keep yer wits about ye,"
My uncle ust ter say,
On Sunday afternoon when I's
About ter drive away;
"Yer startin' out, yer young and green,
Jest like some gal to rout ye,
Keep level-headed, be serene,
An' hev yer wits about ye."

II.

"Ah! it's been your experience,"
I'd allus answer him,
"You ust ter go a-courtin'
An' yer chances then wuz slim;"
My uncle's face would turn to red,
His cheeks an' lips grow pouchy,
"Take my advice, sir, keep yer head
An' hev yer wits about ye!"

III.

Ever since I wuz a kid,
'Cept mebbe once er twice,
I'd liked my uncle 'speshully
An' follered his advice,
An' now I looked him in the eyes,
My uncle old an' slouchy,
That blamed expression there would rise,—
"Jest keep yer wits about ye."

IV.

An' I have set an' wondered,—
"What kin my uncle know?
'Tis forty years an' over
Since uncle wuz a beau;"
But by-um-by I come to think
My uncle not so slouchy,
An' in my mind his words 'ud sink:
"Jest keep yer wits about ye."

V.

I lived an' learnt considerable
With many ups an' downs,
I got severe reproaches,
I met with lots o' frowns;
I learnt that when yer scooped aside
The game goes on without ye,—
An' that a feller's safest guide
Is, "Keep yer wits about ye."

VI.

"Jest keep yer wits about ye,"
My uncle ust ter say,—
An' this advice he gave me then
Will do fer chaps today;—
"Jest count yerself," says-ee, "as one,
An' ever'thing without ye
Regard as number two, an' son,
Jest keep yer wits about ye."

"'Jest keep yer wits about ye,'
My uncle ust ter say,
On Sunday afternoon when I's
About ter drive away"

TO HERO ICHENOMEYA

(A Japanese friend in college.)

I.

I'VE knowed you for a year er two, an' I can truly say
That since we've been acquainted there has never come a day
When publicly or privately, as I can recollect,
You treated me with malice or any disrespect.

II.

Hero Ichenomeya, you've come here from Japan,
Americans who know you say you're ever' inch a man,
And in this yere opinion I honestly agree,
As judgin' from your conduct as it appears to me.

III.

I've mixed with ordeenary folks an' folks of culture, too,
I have some idies o' my own, I got my pint o' view;
I'm purty apt at judgin' an' since I've been with you
Your natural charact'ristics, I've read 'em through an' through.

IV.

Today I can approach you with a cheerful smile an' take
Your hand in mine an' squeeze it hard for honest friendship's sake;
You never seemed so stuck-up as a feller's ap' to be
Who has attained the dignity of *senior,* seems to me.

V.

So *you're* a *senior! you* about to carry your A. B.
Out here in Indiana, and besides a Japanee!
You must o' worked hard with your hands an' put in lots o' licks
Since you've been here in college,—how old are you?—"Twenty-six!"

VI.

The boys in college like you, both the wealthy an' the pore,
Your friends are staunch an' earnest, an' they number many a score;
And when your class-mates honored you, outsiders realized
That you deserved the dignity and wasn't much supprised.

VII.

I highly prize your friendship an' 'speshully regret
To part with your society, but never shall forget
Our happy days together and of friends so good and true,
So kind and sympathizin', I'm indebted most to you!

VIII.

Well, Hero, when I come to think about you, I'll be blamed!
There never was a feller, who was any better named;
As one who loves his feller-man and loves his country too,
I never met a patriot more genuine than you.

IX.

And so, old friend, jest be yourself, concludin' I would say,
Yourself throughout the sun and shade of life's uncertain day;
Along the devious path and dark, O may we journey twain,
Our hearts still linked together by true friendship's golden chain!

A HAPPY MEETING

I.

O READER dear, if you were here
A story I might tell,
How as I passed through Richmond last
A curious thing befell
Me as I gazed at one, amazed,
Who paused to gaze on me,
I wondered who,—and he did too,—
The other chap might be.

II.

We gazed awhile, then with a smile
Each recognized the other,
Now more esteemed because each seemed
Familiar as a brother;
I saw the green,—of course I mean
I saw fun's laughing glitter,—
Well, anyway, if green, I say
'Twas green without green's bitter.

III.

O there are hours when nameless flowers
  Breathe odors sweet in air,
When joy expands to burst the bands
  Of melancholy care!
The striving crowd may revel loud
  In pleasure deemed complete,
But nothing can be merrier than
  When two "fools" chance to meet!

"Each recognized the other"

PA'S FOURTH

I.

THE folks once tried to celebrate
The Fourth day of July,
So Ma she sent me out to ketch
A chicken fer to fry;
Ketched a nice young pullet,
Tuk it in to her,
Ma says,—"You stupid youngin',
What did you ketch this fer?
We can't spare our pullets,
Go, turn that one loose,—
Mind yer mammy quickly,
Offer no excuse,—
When we have fried chicken,
Mind ye, ever' time,
We ketch roosters fer they don't
Fetch us but a dime."

II.

Well, I turned the pullet
  Loose, and once agin
With a grea' big rooster
  I came walkin' in;
This time Ma wuz worried
  'Cause she'd gone an' got
Ever'thing plum ready
  An' the water hot,
She don't trust me any more
  But she say to Sis:
"Turn the cakes, fer mercy' sakes!
  While I 'tend to this."

III.

Then she tuk an ear o' corn,
  Shelled it off an' fed
Some thirty er forty chickens
  That roosted in the shed,
Ketched a fine young rooster,
  Sentenced him to die,
An' 'fore many minutes
  He wuz on to fry;

In about an hour
  Table it wuz set,
An' I had my appitite
  Purty keenly whet.

IV.

Pa an' Ma an' Sis an' me
  Each one tuk our place
At the table, an' Pa, he—
  He don't say no grace;
"But," says-ee, "you youngsters
  Set back in yer chairs,—
Haint ye got no manners?
  Hain't ye been nowheres?
Have a little gumption
  An' patience jest to wait
Till yer pap has time to put
  Some chicken on yer plate!"

V.

"Pap," says I, "they's others
'Sides us like as not,"—
But right then that pa o' mine
Dropped the coffee-pot,—
He jest tuk the gravy dish,
Fished me out the neck,
"That's your share," he says, says-ee,
"But not another speck;"
He give Ma the drumsticks,
Sis the pully-bone,
An' he et up all the rest
By hisself alone!

"An' he et up all the rest
By hisself alone."

THE HONEST PRIDE OF A COUNTRY LAD

I.

I DON'T tell no man,—no sir, not my brother,
What my bizness is:—I'd ruther
Git clean scrapped up once er twice,
Yes, i jacks, than tell these nice
Dudes with gum in mouth a-chewin'
Ever'thing on airth I'm doin'!—
When these quizzin 'saps come nigh,
"None yer bizness," I says I.

II.

What's the difference anyway?
I kin work er I kin play;
When I've worked an' when I've played
I kin waller in the shade;
I kin take my old terbacker,
Whet my blame' barlow an' whack 'er
An' kin chew;—I pay my tax,—
Nobody's bizness, now,—i—jacks!

III.

Oncet ez I wuz loaferin' 'round
One blame' Saturday in town,
Some big town guy straddled me,—
"What ye doin' here?" says-ee,
"Git back to the country where
Ye belong,—how come ye here?"—
I jest poked 'im in the eye,
"None yer bizness!" I says I.

IV.

Seed a couple, I believe,
Drivin' 'long one Sunday eve;
Knowed they's somepin' goin' to be
'Cause I heerd the gal tee-hee;
Nen she tried to speel off smart:
"Where's yer old farm hoss an' cart?"
An' as they drove whizzin' by,—
"None yer bizness," I says I.

V.

Tother day at Jones's sale
Abe walks up an' says, "Ye's pale,
Mebby ploddin' down life's hill,
Hadn't ye better make ye will?
How's ye livèr gittin' 'long?
Is ye appitite still strong?
When ye ever goin' to die?"—
"——! None yer bizness!" I says I.

"I jest poked 'im in the eye"

"JIM" AND "JAKE"

(The "Jim" of the following poem was suggested to the writer by a real character with whom he became acquainted in college. While part of the story is true to fact, much has been invented to serve certain purposes of the writer. But there are "Jims" today, and in every community are also to be found those good-looking, good-natured, and slow-going fellows popularly known as "country-jakes.")

I.

JIM and Jake wuz babies, twin brothers, don't you know,
Jake et an' slep' an' grew, but little Jim jest wouldn't grow;
His ma tried soothin' syrup an' other medicine,
Yet Jim seemed sot on stayin' a leetle crumped-up twin.

II.

Now Jake wuz made lots over an' patted on the cheek,
Wuz tuk to see his gramma three an' four times a week,
'Cause gramma allus humored him an' jest deeclared that he
Wuz the sweetest, smartest baby in the whole community.

III.

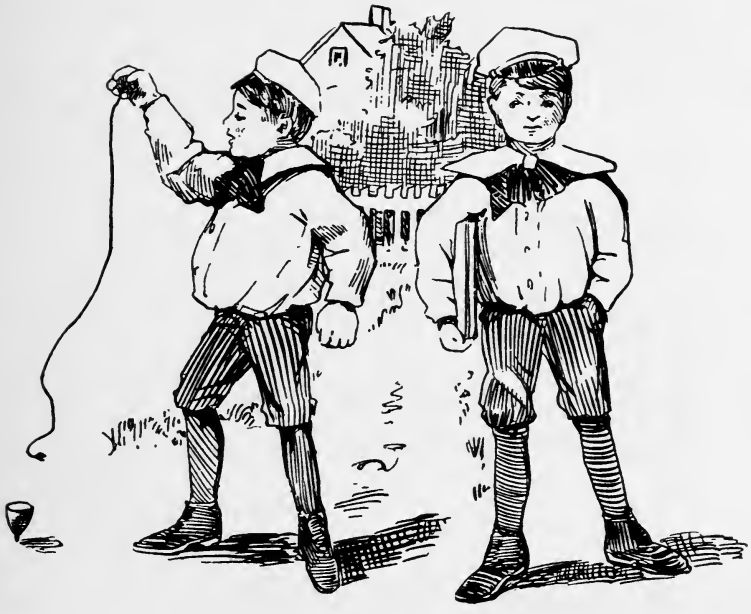
Pore little Jim wuz puny an' allus seemed so frail
That his ma lost all hopes early an' looked fer his health to fail,
An' when Jim talked an' Jake didn't when each wuz eight months old,—
"Pore little Jake," their ma complained, "has got a awful cold!"

IV.

Well, Jake did have a habit o' kickin' kivvers off,
An' keepin' all the house awake by his outrageous cough,—
Yet all the womern-folks agreed an' kinder sided in
That though Jim wuz a purty boy, Jake wuz as sweet agin.

V.

The first excitement over, when some few years'd gone by,
They noticed Jim could name the states, could add an' multiply,
While Jake had tuk delight in toys, an' wuzn't nigh so quick
At namin' states in joggify an' workin' 'rithmetic.



"Jake had tuk delight in toys"

VI.

Both entered school,—an' O their ma did take on mighty hard
When they brought to her fer signin', each his little report card!
Fer all her female follies, folks wuz sorry most fer her,
As she turned from Jake to murmur, "What's this ejication fer?"

VII.

Now neighbors an' relations had begun to size up Jim
An' wonder what perfession wuz to open up fer him;
Yet sorter sympathizin', sometimes fer his mother's sake,
They'd guess on many a lucky move the game had yet fer Jake.

VIII.

Jim went away to college, an' gained distinction there,
Jake tuk no chances, hired out, fer books he didn't keer;—
So when Jim rose commencement day to honor his degree,
His ma, with friends an' strangers, saw the man who wuz to be.

IX.

O how supprised his class-mates wuz, they shrank as in alarm
When it was told that this same man had bought hisself a farm,
Had hired his brother Jacob to feed an' milk an' slop
While he hisself looked after the raisin' o' the crop!

X.

In spite o' gale an' gossip, honest Jim wuz widely known
To be the people's champion to the morry o' the bone;
An' when before the public they summoned him to speak,
He flung his point-blank periods to defend the suffering weak.

XI.

At len'th a party caucus in the old home county met
To feel the pulse fer gov'nor, but 'twuzn't clear jest yet
What ch'ice they'd make; some feller rose an' nominated Jim,
But the factions split contrary an' didn't vote fer him.

XII.

Now when the State convention hung, they looked fer a "dark horse,"
An' Jim wuz nominated fer to run the final course;
An' when returns wuz published there arose the shout, "Long live
Our country, an' our own dear state, an' her executive!"

XIII.

Ah! where is Jim's poor mother, an' where is brother Jake?
Two forms come toiling forward, one bent with many an ache,
Bent low with many a secret care her sturdy son beside,
As weepingly she murmurs, "Jim, my boy, my darling pride!"

XIV.

The throng is hushed an' tearful as he tenders one caress
With a pause of dear affection which but silence can express;

"Brother Jake, behold our mother, go, keep up the
little farm,
May Heaven's smile be o'er you to protect you from
all harm."

* * * * * *

XV.

Jim an' Jake wuz babies, twin brothers, don't ye know,
Jake et an' slept an' grew but little Jim jest wouldn't
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His ma tried soothin' syrup an' other medicine,
Yet Jim seemed sot on stayin' a leetle crumped-up
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